

That Which is Claimed

1. A method of distributing movies to customer households comprising the steps of:

blanket transmitting a plurality of movies to customer households;

permitting each customer household to preselect and record desired movies;

permitting each customer household to playback for viewing any preselected, recorded movie;

communicating movie playback information from each customer household to a central controller system; and

billing customer households for only those preselected, recorded movies that are played back for viewing.

2. The method of claim 1 including the step of periodically communicating to each customer household information identifying available movies that will be transmitted.

3. The method of claim 2 including communicating pricing information for playback of specific movies or categories of movies.

4. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of blanket transmitting movies is carried out according to a pre-established schedule designating when each movie or class of movies will be transmitted and further including the step of

communicating to each customer household information concerning
when available movies will be transmitted.

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5 5. The method of claim 1 including the step of
encoding the transmitted movies with data permitting playback
only on a playback device with compatible decoding means.

6. The method of claim 5 including the step of
encoding the transmitted movies with time-based code keys A.

10 7. The method of claim 6 wherein the time-based code
keys A encoded into the transmitted movies are correlated with
periodic time-based key codes B that are blanket transmitted to
all customer households and time-based key codes C that are
provided to customer households that are in good standing.

15 8. The method of claim 7 wherein the step of
communicating movie playback information from each customer
household to the central controller system is performed when the
time-based codes C are provided.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the communications
between the central controller system and the customer
households are carried out via phone/modem.

20 10. The method of claim 1 including the step of
utilizing the movie playback information communicated to the
controller unit to credit the accounts of the content providers
who provide movies for distribution.

25 11. The method of claim 1 including the step of
dividing the transmitted movies into tiers that are transmitted

more or less often according to customer demand for movies in each particular tier.

12. The method of claim 11 including the step of transmitting at least a substantial number of new release movies at least once every two hours prior to and during prime time evening viewing hours.

13. The method of claim 2 wherein the step of periodically communicating to each customer household information identifying available movies includes communicating information accessible through a graphic user interface.

14. The method of claim 13 including the step of permitting each customer household to preselect and record desired movies is carried out by the customer inputting customer commands through an on-screen interactive program guide.

15. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of blanket transmitting movies to customer households is carried out by a transmission mode selected from the group consisting of direct broadcast satellite, optical fiber, cable modem and the Internet.

20  16. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of blanket transmitting is carried out by direct broadcast satellite transmission on multiple channels.

25 17. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of blanket transmitting a plurality of movies is carried out by transmitting movies in compressed-time format.

18. The method of claim 17 wherein the transmission in compressed-time format is carried out by a data transmission means selected from the group consisting of direct broadcast satellite, optical fiber, cable modem, or combination thereof.

5 19. The method of claim 1 including the step of providing available movie information to customer households through a graphical user interface via the Internet.

10 20. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of blanket transmitting is carried out by direct broadcast satellite with transponders using quaternary polarization.

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B3/ 21. The method of claim 20 including the step of using transponders operating at power levels of approximately 240 watts or higher.

15 22. The method of claim 1 wherein the step of blanket transmitting is carried out by direct broadcast satellite with transponders operating at power levels of approximately 240 watts or higher and using quaternary polarization.

20 23. The method of claim 1 including the step of blanket transmitting music selections for preselection, recording and playback.

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24. A method of distributing movies to customer households comprising the steps of:

blanket transmitting a plurality of movies to customer households;

5 at each customer household, preselecting desired transmitted movies for recording;

at each customer household, recording preselected movies when they are transmitted;

10 at each customer household, playing back those preselected, recorded movies that the customer household desires to view;

providing a central controller system having a database for storing therein an address corresponding to each customer household;

15 communicating information from each customer household to the controller system to verify that a preselected, recorded movie has been played back for viewing; and

using the communicated viewing information to charge each customer household when it views a preselected, recorded movie.

25. A system for distributing movies to customer households, comprising:

means for blanket transmitting a plurality of movies to customer households;

5 means permitting each customer household to preselect and record desired movies;

BY means permitting each customer household to playback for viewing any preselected, recorded movie;

10 means for communicating movie playback information from each customer household to a central controller system; and

means for billing customer households for only those preselected, recorded movies that are played back for viewing.

26. A system for distributing movies to customer households, comprising:

a data transmission system blanket transmitting a plurality of encoded movies to customer households;

5 a user station at each customer household, the user station including means permitting the customer household to preselect desired transmitted movies for recording;

a receiver and associated recording device at each customer household for recording preselected movies;

10 a playback device at each customer household for playing back those preselected, recorded movies that the customer household desires to view;

a central controller system having a database for storing therein an address corresponding to each customer 15 household;

a communications link between each customer household and the central controller system to verify to the controller system that a preselected, recorded movie has been played back for viewing; and

20 a billing system associated with the central controller system to bill customer households for only those preselected, recorded movies that are played back for viewing.

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27. A method of distributing music to customer households comprising the steps of:

blanket transmitting a plurality of music selections to customer households;

5 providing each customer household with information identifying available music selections that will be transmitted;

permitting each customer household to preselect and record desired music selections;

10 permitting each customer household to permanently select recorded music selections that the customer wishes to maintain for unrestricted playback;

15 communicating permanent selection information from each customer household to a central controller system; and

billing customer households for the recorded music selections that are permanently selected.

28. The method of claim 27 wherein the step of blanket transmitting comprises direct broadcast satellite transmission.

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